



SLU CALM Resources

Academic Writing

Writing Journals

Strategies for writing a sociology journal

Below is a *possible approach* to help you to write a journal entry. Remember that this is only one way and you should *ask your tutor* for guidance.

First it is necessary to examine the question you have to address. For example: 'Is it possible to compensate the Stolen Generation?'

Stage 1

Before you do any reading, write down your initial responses to the question. For example you might feel like this:

"It should be possible to compensate the Stolen Generation because what I've heard makes me feel something should be done to rectify the wrong that was done to them." Or "It's probably possible to compensate the Stolen Generation but I'm not sure it would actually help anyone to do so and it would cost a lot of money."

OR

"I don't know what the Stolen Generation is. I've never heard of it. or Members of my family are part of the so-called Stolen Generation and it disturbs me to have to write about this sort of thing and I don't know if I want to."

Stage 2

Note any other responses you have. For example:

Compensate could mean with money but I wonder of it's possible to compensate people in any other way? Whose responsibility is it to compensate? Have other groups been compensated for wrongs done to them?

Stage 3

Start to do the reading and make notes as you read. If because of the reading you feel that you can add to or develop your thoughts, feelings, ideas from above, then do so. At this stage you don't have to worry about sentence structure or grammar. Just get your thoughts on paper.

Example of a first draft of a journal.

Reading the article by Jones (1998) made me realise that the Stolen Generation is a complicated issue and one which has affected far more people than I realised. Like the white invaders who felt embarrassed by the presence of the indigenous people, I feel embarrassed and guilty that this happened in the first place. Jones argues strongly that something should be done and his arguments seem strong because of the evidence he presents as support and because of his convincing legal and moral arguments such as...I found Bloggs's (1995) opinions shocking because she presents a point of view that I find abhorrent, that is that the Stolen Generation should be treated as an historical event for which we have no responsibility in the 1990s. This is a simplistic response and refuses to acknowledge that people should be compensated for wrongs done to them. After all, people are often compensated for things that go wrong e.g hospital operations. Unfortunately it seems that if you are already in a weaker position because of your colour, occupation (or lack of it), or sex, that your chances of being compensated are reduced because you don't have the same capacity to fight the powers that be. This leads me to think that the Stolen Generation should be compensated on the basis of humanitarian reasons if nothing else but that there should be a way of doing this which means that they don't have to fight the whole system alone. This makes me think of the discussion in week 2 in the tutorial when we learned about power structures in society and how it seems on the surface that people are treated equally but in fact they are not.